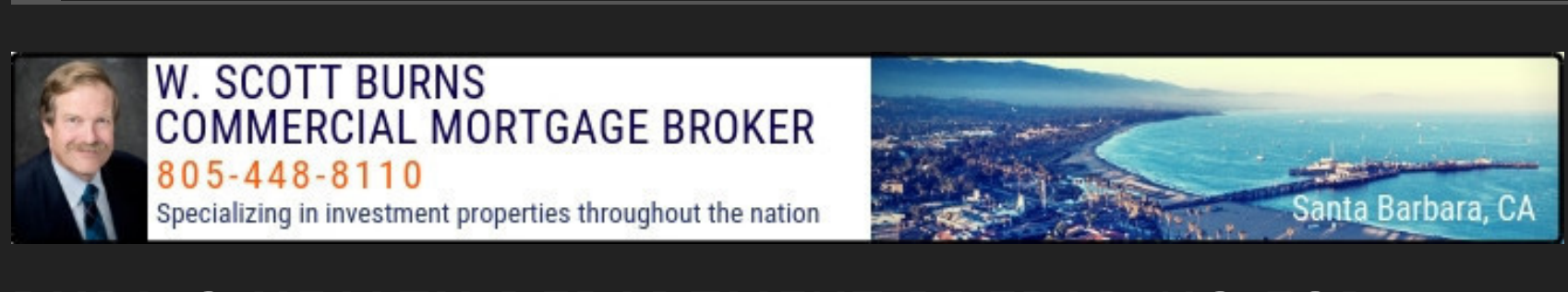
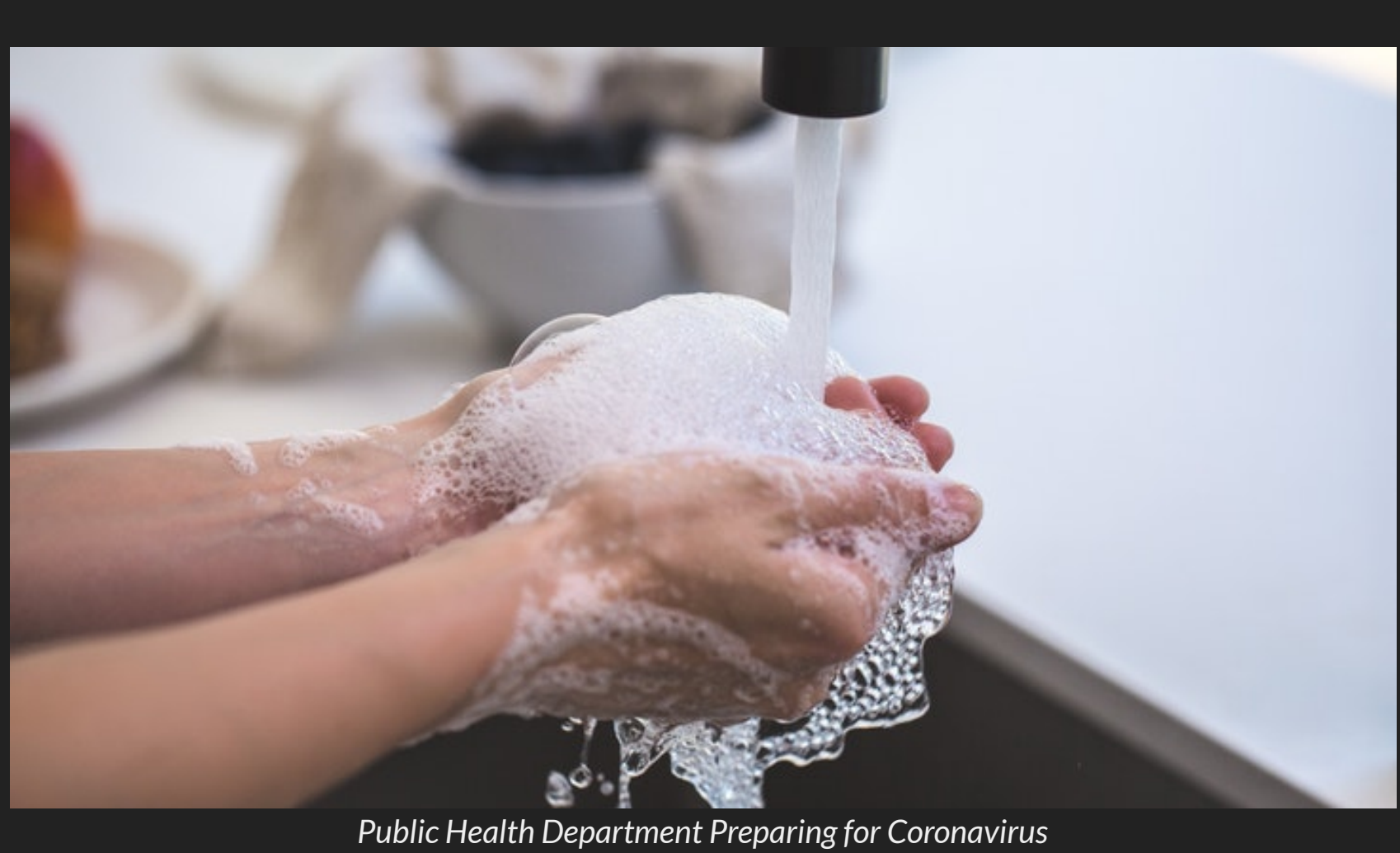
Your Career is calling, grow with us.
UC SANTA BARBARA | EXTENSION Professional and Continuing Education


W. SCOTT BURNS
COMMERCIAL MORTGAGE BROKER
805-448-8110
Specializing in investment properties throughout the nation
Santa Barbara, CA

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT PREPARING FOR CORONAVIRUS



Public Health Department Preparing for Coronavirus

PUBLIC NEWS / MAR 07 2020 01:58 PM / BYEDHAT STAFF / 13 COMMENTS / READS 3134

Photo by Burst from Pexels

Source: Santa Barbara County Public Health Department

In the face of a significant increase in the numbers of confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in mainland China and other countries, as well as the western U.S., local residents are understandably worried and fearful. The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (PHD), out of an abundance of caution, is seeking to solidify the county's readiness should the COVID-19 virus be found here or in a nearby county.

The PHD is urging agencies, businesses, organizations, and health care providers throughout the county to develop and/or update a plan for social distancing within 24-48 hours.
County Health Officer, Dr. Henning Ansorg states, "The discovery of community transmission elsewhere in the state makes me feel that COVID-19 could arrive in our county at any time and we want to be prepared." Community transmission means person-to-person spread.

"Our first level of protection comes from the quarantine and isolation of certain individuals," said Dr. Ansorg. He further stressed that these plans will not be put into effect immediately. "Once cases of COVID-19 are found in the community, it will be time to implement social distancing plans."

Social distancing means lessening contact between individuals throughout the county. Businesses, for instance, would review their staffing and identify workers who could work from home, resulting in fewer people and less contact between people at the workplace. Members of the public should speak with their employer about alternative work plans, such as telecommuting.

A population that is at particular risk from the COVID-19 is the elderly. Extended care facilities are being asked to write or update their plans for protecting their residents from interaction with those from outside their place of residence. While children seem to be less impacted by COVID-19 than other groups, schools have made significant advances in their planning for possible temporary closure. Some schools were closed for weeks during the H1N1 pandemic 10 years ago. It is important that schools and childcare facilities have a plan in place and are communicating with parents.

Primary care medical sites are being asked to implement plans to communicate with patients via Skype, FaceTime and over the phone. Many patient visits can be handled distantly thus avoiding crowding of clinics and the resulting increased risk of close contact that might further spread COVID-19. There is little evidence that pregnant women are at particularly increased risk from this virus, but special care should still be taken to decrease their social contacts.

Gatherings such as religious services might consider live streaming so that congregants can view the service from home, or they may consider modifying their service so that there can be at least two spaces between each congregant.

"The cancelation of large, non-essential gatherings is a possibility down the line," said Dr. Ansorg. "Implementation of social distancing plans should be handled with creativity, flexibility and sensitivity."
Above all, people who are starting to feel ill or who are ill, should stay away from others and not go into crowded settings.

People should continue to practice the same habits to prevent themselves from getting the flu. They should wash their hands frequently, elbow or fist bump one another instead of shaking hands or hugging, sneeze or cough into the crook of their elbow and maintain a six-foot or greater distance between themselves and anyone who looks ill. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Get a flu immunization to prevent influenza if they have not done so this season. Wearing a surgical face mask is necessary for those who are ill and going out in public, such as going to the doctor's office. Health care workers interacting with patients should wear an N95 mask.

County PHD is working closely with its healthcare partners to assure screening, testing and care for potential COVID-19 patients. The PHD is providing ongoing guidance and alerts to healthcare partners in close coordination with the state Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Healthcare partners, including EMS providers, are participating in weekly teleconferences with the PHD to assure that procedures are in place at each facility to safely screen patients and protect healthcare workers and the community.

The PHD has been working diligently to prepare for the possibility of a COVID-19 case in the county. The team is in daily contact with state and federal officials and agencies and is closely monitoring neighboring counties for possible COVID-19 cases. The PHD Department Operations Center (D.O.C.) has been activated as of March 6. The PHD reminds the community of the steps to take to protect their health and the health of those around them:

- Wash your hands with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough

For more information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019), please visit the SBCPHD website www.countyofsb.org/phd/ or call the PHD information line at 805-681-4373, and for the most up to date information regarding the novel coronavirus on the national level, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Share Save Share Tweet

⚠ Login to add Comments

COMMENTS PENALTY BOX

No Comments Deleted Due To Down Vote

2 Comments Deleted By Administrator

SEE ALL

13 COMMENTS

Toggle Comments (Show)

A-1583726540 MAR 08, 2020 08:18 PM

My fiancée and I returned from a 17-day international cruise on February 22, both very sick, both suffering from the exact symptoms of COVID 19--the EXACT symptoms. I contracted the disease, which I presumed was the 2020 flu, on February 14. I started on the antiviral flu medication, Tamiflu, three times a day, with 500 mg of Zithromax to prevent a secondary bacterial infection that my immunologists felt could lead to pneumonia. My fiancée, who was vaccinated against the 2020 flu and who never gets sick, succumbed to the same disease six days later. I was bed-bound for the last five days of the cruise, and we both returned home on Saturday, February 22, feeling very ill, and we have been mostly bed and couch-bound ever since. I didn't suspect COVID 19 as the pathogen. Still, I wanted to be sure, so I contacted my immunologists and general physician Tue February 25. Neither doctor was able to order COVID 19 testing as no place in town was performing the test. My GP contacted the SB County health department about this case, and the doctor in charge listened to the story of our 17-day international cruise. I let her know that the 2,000 passengers were mostly from the US and Canada, virtually all of the 1000 crew members were Asian, from China, Korea, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia... With this information in mind--that we both had the identical symptoms of COVOD 19 and had spent 17 days with a thousand Asians on our cruise ship--I now call them "pathogen ships", and had visited six or seven countries, the County Health doctor did not feel that testing was warranted because we were not hospitalized with an acute respiratory disease, nor had we recently visited China, South Korea, or Iran and that our illness seemed to be improving. I again emphasized that the 1000 cruise members were Asians, but that did not seem to matter. We continued to suffer from what we could only explain as the worst flu of our lives: incessant coughs, fevers, fatigue, disrupted sleep, headaches, and night sweats. On Monday, March 2, I contacted Santa Barbara infectious specialist, Dr. Seth Anderson, as he is a go-to guy when it comes to complex diseases and testing. I left a message that I thought there was a chance we were infected with the COVID 19 virus and likely needed to required immediate testing. I practically begged him to have us tested, and I told him I could come by his office in an N95 mask to minimize risks. I did not receive a return call from Dr. Anderson or his staff. I again contacted my GP and immunologist, and they called all of the labs in town including the County Health Department and reported back to me that nobody was doing testing at this time. We have been back in Santa Barbara for 15 days, and my fiancée and I are still mostly homebound. We are mostly bed or couch-bound, and this marks my 23 days of severe illness and my fiancée's 17 or 18 days of severe illness--she says, "the sickest I've ever been." I stopped taking the flu antiviral, Tamiflu, that I had been on for 21 straight days as I no longer thought that the flu was the culprit; my fiancée took it for 10 days, but it didn't benefit her either. My confidence grows that the likely pathogen causing our illness is COVID 19. Yet we still cannot get tested. Nobody has told us to self-quarantine, though we have done this as much as possible. We returned to an empty refrigerator and pantry after being away 20 days, so we made a few trips to the grocery and drug stores. But otherwise, we've had food delivered and have picked up food to go, trying to minimize our exposure to the general public in case this is the Coronavirus. We had disinfectant wipes in our hands when we were out. I am sad and disheartened that the CDC was unable to handle the single most crucial aspect of any potential epidemic: provide accurate, rapid testing. The current presidential administration cut their budget CDC budget and the offices of epidemic/pandemic awareness and the epidemic/pandemic task force. There has been much discussion about the failure of this administration's ability to listen to scientists on many scientific matters, including global warming. South Korea performed something like 30,000 COVID 19 tests within ONE WEEK after their first case of a community spread COVID 19 case. The US had conducted less than 2,000 tests as of the end of last Friday, almost two months after this disease was on the move, more than three months since the virus started to spread on December 19, 2019. The administration asked the CDC to no longer show the number of COVID 19 tests performed and the number of positive results on its website daily; that information has removed entirely. We all know why: a high number of cases reflects poorly on the administration in the face of financial cuts to the CCD and the groups responsible for protecting Americans against epidemics/pandemics. The good news is that my fiancée and I have been slowly improving for the past six days, and it is clear that this disease, no matter what it is, will not take our lives. I have hope that we have COVID 19 because that means that we not only survive this horrible disease, but we did. That would be particularly good news for the tens of millions of ME/CFS patients worldwide who believe that infection by this virus could end their lives. I'm here to say that that will not be the case in my situation, and my finance's too, and what should add even more hope to others is our ages--I am 63, and my fiancée is 57. We will likely still be mostly self-quarantined for the next week or two, and are still desperately trying to get tested. But we must go out to get groceries and supplies. And in doing so, are we exposing the community to the COVID-19 virus?

SBMH2015 MAR 08, 2020 08:27 PM

I strongly suggest you contact the CDC. It is disgraceful that we don't have the testing available. I would contact your doctor again tomorrow. Hope you feel better soon

THEKID5 MAR 08, 2020 11:53 AM

It is doubtful that the Grand Princess will sail for several weeks. Mayor Murillo and the City Council have lagged and not been out in front of the corona virus threat. The readers who have commented on the virus' threat to downtown Santa Barbara are 100% correct! The city must place wash stations in all areas that are frequented by transients and the homeless. This is one of the few tourists areas where our local government induces people to use our public areas for toilets and provide no washing facilities, The downtown public library has become a tough place for people to go just to read a publication, as it is used by transients for a cleaning and toilet facility. Pity the poor librarians! Now to the coronavirus--- It is difficult to detect in carriers with no symptoms! It has a long shelf life on hard surfaces, could be as much as 10 days. It has no medical cure at this time. It will come here! It will overwhelm our health facilities and workers. Cruise ships have been proven to be floating petri dishes for the coronavirus' spread. Santa Barbara should be closed to any further cruise ship visits because their configuration of close quarters and elderly passengers makes them the most dangerous coronavirus carrier of any form of mass transit. Ask the hundreds of patients who caught the virus on their cruise ship and the thousands whose lives are now trapped on cruise ships.

A-1583726540 MAR 08, 2020 10:22 AM

There is a city council meeting on the Coronavirus on Tuesday and the city's so-called preparedness. Given that the mayor still wants cruise ships to stop by Santa Barbara and all she can talk about is downtown businesses it's very unlikely that she's going to want to cancel any large events. - More likely she will encourage people to go out and eat at a restaurant. - Don't we have Earth day coming up? Doesn't that bring 100,000 people downtown? People from all over the country descend upon Santa Barbara for this event and others. We need to be discussing canceling events and large gatherings now and what exactly would trigger the cancellation. We also need to discuss what happens when our workforce is locked in their house for 2 weeks and they can't afford their rent, or food or medical bills. We have a huge population that is living on the edge and we need to talk about what happens when whatever nest egg they have is gone. Are these people going to end up homeless? Is the city going to pass any ordinances to ensure that they're not kicked out of their house? We really need to have a deep discussion on this topic. But at the same time how many people are going to show up to a meeting at City Hall on Tuesday? That will be a huge public gathering and should we even be having public gatherings at this point? If one person is sick how many people can be infected in the council chambers? Is the city council even going to provide everyone with masks when they enter City Hall? If you're concerned about this send an email to the city council. Their Joi t email address is: SBCityCouncil@SantaBarbaraCA.Gov

THEREALBEBE MAR 08, 2020 04:57 PM

YES great points raised here. In this digital age, there is no reason that the City can't have a virtual meeting which we can all attend without having to convene in large numbers. City needs to adopt one of the many platforms that already exist for virtual meetings, most of which allow virtual "attendees" to ask questions.

THEKID5 MAR 08, 2020 02:27 PM

Excellent comments!

A-1583726540 MAR 08, 2020 09:47 AM

It won't matter one bit if 500 cruise ships stop by the Port of Santa Barbara. The people on those ships are less likely to become infected that say, oh, I dunno... sitting on any bench on State St. or getting a double-cupped triple venti half-caf breve (no-foam) two sachet Splenda stirred skinny two-pump peppermint schmoca-loca at Starbucks.

THEREALBEBE MAR 08, 2020 04:59 PM

@10:24am yes, it DID happen. As the mother of a young child at the time, I and others were acutely aware of this specific event. You just weren't paying attention.

A-1583726540 MAR 08, 2020 10:24 AM

Never happened, but this seems like a vivid memory.

PSTARSR MAR 08, 2020 10:06 AM

you havent been watching whats been going on have you? the Norovirus that raged through our town a few years ago. (horrible stomach flu) Came from one of those ships, its not hard to say that this could also bring something unwanted. I for one think prudence is better than stubbornness. Stop the cruise ships till they get that sorted out.

SBGAL74 MAR 08, 2020 09:28 AM

This article mentions preparedness if the virus is found in "our county or in a nearby county" Ahhh, just yesterday it was announced that it has been found in Ventura County. Last time I checked that is nearby. It's likely that we may already have people who are infected here as well. We all need to remain vigilant and practice these safety measures that are mentioned. The city needs to be much more aggressive about putting out public service announcements to residents about what symptoms may look like and what to do if you get sick. For God's sake PLEASE CANCEL Santa Barbara as a cruise ship destination! Allowing those floating Petri dishes to stop here is just inviting the expedited spread of this virus.

A-1583726540 MAR 08, 2020 09:20 AM

I sure hope the local health agencies do NOT listen to anything The Big Huncher is saying about the coronavirus. Talk about hot contaminated air!

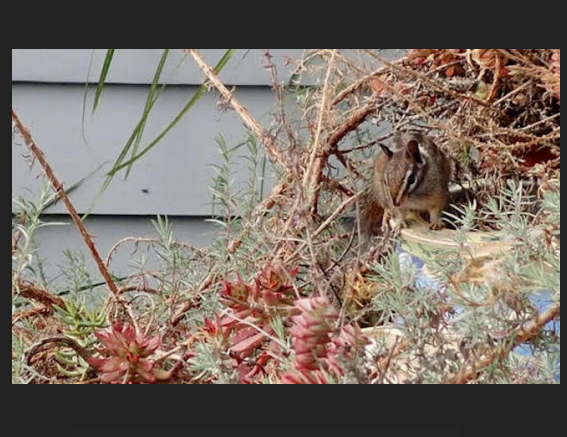
A-1583726540 MAR 07, 2020 05:47 PM

SFGate: How to tell the difference between a cold, the flu or corona virus:....."It's really hard because in all those things the spectrum of disease is broad," said Dr. Lee Atkinson-McEvoy, a pediatric doctor at UC San Francisco. "Even in coronavirus, they're seeing people who have milder disease, so just a cough and runny nose, but no fever. Some people who test positive are asymptomatic, meaning no symptoms at all." Coronaviruses are among a group of viruses that cause the "common cold," and there are seven known ones that can infect humans. Four of these (229E, HKU1, OC43 and NL63) are seasonal and typically cause mild respiratory infection – fever, cough, nasal congestion, and headache, according to Dr. Charles Chiu, a professor of laboratory medicine and infectious disease at UC San Francisco. "The remaining three coronaviruses (MERS, SARS, COVID-19) are the result of recent zoonotic (animal-to-human) transmission events and although they are also associated with mild respiratory symptoms, infection can progress to cause severe, life-threatening pneumonia," Dr. Chiu shared in an email..."

Please Login or Register to comment on this.

RELATED ARTICLES

MISDIRECTED SIGN?
LOCAL NEWS / MAR 08, 2020


THE ELUSIVE CHIPMUNK
NATURE / MAR 08, 2020

ONE INJURY IN HIGHWAY 166 VEHICLE COLLISION
NEWS REPORT / MAR 08, 2020

BUY EDHAT STUFF
SHOP NOW

SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSLETTER

UPGRADE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Enterprise Forum Central Coast
BY THEIR OWN DEVICE:
Building a Successful Medical Device Business in Santa Barbara
Wed., Mar. 18, 2020 | 5:00 - 8:00 PM
Carrillo Recreation Center
100 E. Carrillo St. | Santa Barbara, CA
SPEAKERS
Sumita Pennathur UCSB Engineering
Alison Bauerlein Inogen
Bree Hendrick VivaHire
Sandi Hirsch Zyris
Astrid McNellis Terumo BCT (Moderator)

Latest Comments Popular Articles
Latest Articles

NEW GRANT TO RENOVATE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB KITCHEN
Awesome!
ChillinGrillin / March 8, 2020

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT PREPARING FOR CORONAVIRUS
I strongly suggest you
sbmh2015 / March 8, 2020

CAT OF THE WEEK: FRECKLES
Like my Dad always said,
channelcat5 / March 8, 2020

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT PREPARING FOR CORONAVIRUS
My fiancée and I returned
Rich / March 8, 2020

ONE INJURY IN HIGHWAY 166 VEHICLE COLLISION
Wow, gnarly pics. Looks like
SBLIFE / March 8, 2020

SANTA BARBRA POLICE NAB AUTO THEFT SUSPECTS
'The keys to the vehicle were
goletatim / March 8, 2020

WAY BACK WHEN: SPANISH FLU ADVICE
My comment about focusing on
bjgreen / March 8, 2020

MISDIRECTED SIGN?
I would have to agree with A
d8vanilla / March 8, 2020

SCANNER REPORTS 3-6-20
Hi Roger. Last week you were
Longing2bhome / March 8, 2020

TIPS TO SURVIVE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME
Now you've piqued my interest
ChemicalSuperFreak / March 8, 2020

WANT TO SUBMIT YOUR DEAL?

If you want to submit your deal, add this product to your cart and complete the checkout process. You then will be able to submit your deal.

ADD TO CART

92.9 KjEE

In less than a week #fitzandthetantrums will be back in the 805 playing the #venturatheater! Listen to win your way into the show all weekend long on 92.9 KJEE!

0 comments 56 likes

Feel yourself again after surgery
ALIGNED PILATES

edhat .com
santa barbara
Voted Santa Barbara's Best Website for 10 years in a row, edhat is local news from your community

ABOUT US

edhat LLC
PO Box 3846, Santa Barbara, CA 93130
ed@edhat.com

© Copyright admin. All rights reserved.